

A SERMON AGAINST “FREE LOVEISM”

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The following is excerpted from the sermon “Brawn and Muscle” by T. De Witt Talmage. It was preached in 1885 at the Brooklyn Tabernacle (not the rock & roll charismatic Brooklyn Tabernacle of our day). This is the type of sermon that needs to be proclaimed from every Bible-believing pulpit in the land against the sin and iniquity of our day. If such a thing happened, perhaps God would send a revival and grant our nation a stay of execution. It’s time for the smiley-face preachers and the judge not preachers and the soft-spoken artsy emergents and every cowardly Baptist that is afraid of his own shadow to sit down and shut up and to be replaced with the Enochs of old, who railed against sin in the name of a thrice-holy God (Jude 14-15).

Behold also, how a giant may be slain of a woman. Delilah started the train of circumstances that pulled down the temple of Dagon about Samson's ears. And tens of thousands of giants have gone down to death and hell through the same impure fascinations. It seems to me that it is high time that pulpit and platform and printing-press speak out against the impurities of modern society. Fastidiousness and Prudery say: "Better not speak—you will rouse up adverse criticism; you will make worse what you want to make better; better deal in glittering generalities; the subject is too delicate for polite ears." But there comes a voice from heaven overpowering the mincing sentimentalities of the day, saying: "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins."

The trouble is that when people write or speak upon this theme they are apt to cover it up with the graces of belles-lettres, so that the crime is made attractive instead of repulsive. Lord Byron in "Don Juan" adorns this crime until it smiles like a May queen. Michelet, the great French writer, covers it up with bewitching rhetoric until it glows like the rising sun, when it ought to be made loathsome as a small-pox hospital. There are to-day influences abroad which, if unresisted by the pulpit and the printing-press, printing-press, will turn New York and Brooklyn into Sodom and Gomorrah, fit only for the storm of fire and brimstone that whelmed the cities of the plain.

You who are seated in your Christian homes, compassed by moral and religious restraints, do not realize the gulf of iniquity that bounds you on the north and the south and the east and the west. While I speak there are tens of thousands of men and women going over the awful plunge of an impure life; and while I cry to God for mercy upon their souls, I call upon you to marshal in the defense of your homes, your Church and your nation. There is a banqueting hall that you have never heard described. You know all about the feast of Ahasuerus, where a thousand lords sat. You know all about Belshazzar's carousal, where the blood of the murdered king spurted into the faces of the banqueters. You may know of the scene of riot and wassail, when there was set before Esopus one dish of food that cost \$400,000. But I speak now of a different banqueting

hall. Its roof is fretted with fire. Its floor is tessellated with fire. Its chalices are chased with fire. Its song is a song of fire. Its walls are buttresses of fire. Solomon refers to it when he says: "Her guests are in the depths of hell."

Our American communities are suffering from the gospel of Free Loveism, which, fifteen or twenty years ago, was preached on the platform and in some of the churches of this country. I charge upon Free Loveism that it has blighted innumerable homes, and that it has sent innumerable souls to ruin. Free Loveism is bestial; it is worse—it is infernal! It has furnished this land with about one thousand divorces annually. In one county in the State of Indiana it furnished eleven divorces in one day before dinner. It has roused up elopements, North, South, East, and West. You can hardly take up a paper but you read of an elopement.

As far as I can understand the doctrine of Free Loveism it is this: That every man ought to have somebody else's wife, and every wife somebody else's husband. They do not like our Christian organization of society, and I wish they would all elope, the wretches of one sex taking the wretches of the other, and start to-morrow morning for the great Sahara Desert, until the wind shall sweep seven feet of sand all over them, and not one passing caravan for the next five hundred years bring back one miserable bone of their carcasses!

Free Loveism! It is the double-distilled extract of *nux vomica*, ratsbane, and adder's tongue.

Never until society goes back to the old Bible, and hears its eulogy of purity and its anathema of uncleanness—never until then will this evil be extirpated

The previous is from T. De Witt Talmage, New Tabernacle Sermons, 1886.

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